Post Office Department
ASSISTANT POSTMASTER GENERAL
BUREAU OF FINANCE
Washington 25, D. C.

December 9, 1955

To Departments and Agencies of the Government

Subject: PENALTY MAIL

In the past penalty mail in quantities has not been postmarked when agreeable to the mailing agency. The mailings of Treasury checks are in this category. At Washington, D. C., under individual arrangements, the larger percentage of penalty mail is not postmarked.

The Postmaster General would like to extend this arrangement to all penalty mailings to which no stamps are affixed. The basic purpose of the postmark and cancellation is to void the stamp. As Government penalty mail envelopes are printed with return addresses and the date of the transaction appears in the communication, generally there appears to be no compelling reason for postmarking.

Adoption of this proposal will enable the post office to expedite the mail service of the Government agencies. To implement this plan and improve the service, mailing agencies are requested to face and tie penalty mail in bundles--placing those with stamps in separate bundles. If for some reason certain ordinary penalty envelopes must be postmarked, they could be separately faced and tied and that bundle marked, "For Postmarking."

We are asking all mailers to separate local from out-of-town mail and shall appreciate your cooperation if this can be done. This will expedite the initial handling of your mail and put it on its way faster.

Please indicate whether your agency is agreeable to the elimination of the cancellation postmark on penalty mail by notifying the Bureau of Finance, Post Office Department, Washington 25, D. C., by letter or telephone, Code 167, Extension 203 or 617. We would like to issue instructions to all post offices before the heavy holiday mailings, which will aid in expediting both public and government mailings, so we would like to have your concurrence by next week.

Your cooperation is very much appreciated.

Albert J. Robertson
Assistant Postmaster General
and Controller